



# PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## RABIES ALERT!

Delaware Health and Social Services' (DHSS) Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) remind the public that rabies remains present in Delaware and outdoor activities may put residents in proximity to infected animals.

Raccoons, skunks and foxes remain the most frequent carriers of the disease in Delaware, and these animals are active in areas where people live. This also brings these wild animals in close contact with pet dogs and cats, which can also become infected.

Dr. Caroline Hughes, Acting State Veterinarian, advises the public to protect themselves and their families by staying away from wild animals and pets and domesticated animals that are acting strangely.

Dr. Martin Luta of the Division of Public Health said rabies affects different animals in different ways. Some animals become aggressive, and others are passive. "If you can approach the animal, that doesn't mean that it is not rabid," Luta said.

According to Dr. Hughes, "Rabies is prevalent in all Delaware counties. Recently there have been several human exposures to rabies. The types of rabid animals were raccoons, cats, and a horse. Anyone who believes they or a loved one may have had contact with a rabid animal should call the rabies hotline number below.

### **Rabies prevention beats rabies treatment!**

1. Vaccinate your pets. All dogs, cats, and ferrets over 6 months old are to be vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian.
2. Stay away from wild animals and stray cats and dogs.
3. Report stray dogs and cats to Delaware Animal Care and Control - 1-888-3KCSPCA (1-888-352-7722)
4. Stay away from pets and/or domestic animals that are acting strangely.
5. If your pet or farm animal is acting strangely, call your veterinarian.
6. If you suspect that a person, pet or farm animal may have had contact with a rabid animal, call the Bureau of Rabies Prevention, **Rabies Hotline: (302) 744-4545** at the Delaware Division of Public Health.
7. Rabies proof your home:
  - Remove sources of food from buildings and yards
  - Make sure garbage cans have tight-fitting, animal-proof lids.
  - When possible, put garbage cans in garage or shed
  - Feed pets indoors or if you feed them outside, remove any uneaten food right away.

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